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Dear Honorable Members of the Appropriations Committee,

My name is Henry Green and I am a Facilitator for the DSS Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative. I am writing this testimonial to object to the Governors suggestion to cut the funding for the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative. This program is a necessary investment in our state, and the future of our children. There are areas of our state that do not equally enjoy the wealth and stability that the majority of Connecticut does. The statistics certainly are evidence of the drastic disparity, but our efforts fail to reflect upon the need that beckons our attention.

There are 13 towns in Connecticut with disturbingly high percentage rates of teen births, 3 of which I work in personally. These areas reflect those who struggle with poverty in a state that is known for its affluence. The instinct of any institution that claims the mission of maintaining the wellbeing of its people would be to provide support where it is needed. TPPI responds to that call for help and does so effectively. While the national rate teen birth rate for young women is 12.3 per 1000, young women in the TPPI reported having a rate of 4.5 per 1000, almost 3 times lower. Using only evidence based approaches, the TPPI undergoes rigorous vetting processes to prove its effectiveness. Program fidelity is maintained through active program oversight to ensure proper implementation of the evidence-based teen pregnancy prevention models which have long-term evidence of effectiveness in reducing adolescent pregnancy.

Since money is the subject of discussion here, let us also consider the financial impact of this program. DSS funded TPPI programs have economic benefits, for the adolescents served, their communities and Connecticut taxpayers. These are related to impacts such as higher future earnings (and associated tax revenues) from better academic performance and high school completion. Preventing too-early parenthood also reduces long term social costs associated with teen births including: the participation of teen mothers in public assistance programs; and the participation in child welfare, criminal justice, and public health systems among children born to teen parents.

I think that is important to distinguish the difference between a **cost** and an **investment**. A cost gives no return to the purchaser; it is a one-time deal. An investment involves the wisdom and foresight to understand that the little that is given now, will be returned with more than was sacrificed. Investments work in the best interest of the investor. **The funding for TPPI is not a cost for the state, it is an investment;** an investment for the future, an investment for our children, an investment for tax payers. Cutting costs now means counting losses later. Please remember this as you reflect upon this budget.

Thank you

Henry Green

Teen Outreach Program Facilitator

Family Centered Service of CT

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